



The company background

Cloughbane Farm Shop is a family owned business; established in 2003 by Sam and Lorna Robinson to provide a range of exceptionally high quality meat products. Initially a retail business, it has branched into supplying a range of value-added and preservative free products, such as cooked pies, to food service customers and retail outlets.

Employing 20 people at the farm premises in Pomeroy, the company has achieved accolades from prestigious food journalists and is included in a number of Irish Good Food Guides.

The challenge

The company urgently needed to expand capacity in order to meet the rapidly increasing demand from potential new customers. Its strategy was to increase retail outlets in NI and expand its customer base in ROI through a focus on exporting. The main aim was to train its staff to improve efficiency in order to meet the growing demand from retailers.

Training and development of the company's people was identified as the main challenge if the outlined growth objectives were to be achieved.

The BITP intervention

With the assistance of Invest NI's BITP support the company focused on the following aims:

- Development of new and existing employees to a higher level of knowledge and skills across all aspects of their jobs, therefore improving the efficiency and quality performance of the site;
- Improved performance by setting and reviewing measurable targets through the introduction of tools such as balanced scorecard, key performance indicators and an appraisal process; and
- Mapping of training against external food safety and quality standards enabling the company to extend its operations to more customers in new and existing markets.

Summary of key benefits

Everything the company set out to achieve through BITP was fulfilled. Key benefits included:

- Cooked food turnover doubled;
- Farm shop turnover increased substantially; and
- Export markets doubled.

Business Improvement Training Programme

Cloughbane Farm Shop

Current position of the company

Since embarking on the BITP in 2007 the company has grown rapidly, exceeding targets set out in their original business plan. With growing demand for their product range the company is planning to commence a second BITP in 2009 aimed at taking the business to an even higher level. This will focus on training to enable the management team to develop a wider customer base and achieve additional external accreditations including:

- Salsa; and
- Investors in People.

What the client said

"We firmly believe that our business would not have enjoyed its level of success to date without the BITP programme. We have seen a real improvement in the staff especially at supervisory level. People are operating at new and improved levels which have really allowed us to focus on expansion. All these improvements will put us in a better position to see us through the present economic difficulties."

**Sam and Lorna Robinson,
Cloughbane Farm Shop**